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DEATH

THE GATE OF LIFE.



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EVERY MAN A SPIRIT.

“WHOEVER rightly considers the subject, may be aware, that the body does not think, because it is material ; but that the soul does think, because it is spiritual. The soul of man, respecting the immortality of which so much has been written, is his spirit ; for this is immortal as to every thing that belongs to it ; and this it is that thinks in the body. For the spirit is a spiritual existence, and that which is spiritual receives that which is spiritual, and lives in a spiritual manner ; and to live in a spiritual manner is to exercise thought and will. All the rational life, therefore, which appears in the body, belongs to the spirit, and nothing whatever of it to the body. For the body, as just observed, is material ; and materiality, which is what is proper to the body, is a thing added, and almost, as it were, adjoined, to the spirit, in order that the spirit of man might live, and perform uses in the natural world, all the objects of which are material, and, in themselves, void of life. Now, since that which is material does not live, but only that which is spiritual, it may appear with certainty, that whatever lives in man, is his spirit, and that the body only serves it mechanically, just as an instrument serves a living motive force. It is usual to say, indeed, respecting an instrument, that it acts, moves, or strikes ; but to suppose that these powers belong to the instrument, and not to him who acts, moves, or strikes, by it, is a fallacy.

“Since every thing that lives in the body, and, by virtue of such life, acts and feels, is solely of the spirit, and nothing of it whatever is of the body, it follows, that the spirit is the real man ; or, what is much the same, that man, regarded in himself, is a spirit. It also follows, that the spirit exists in a form similar to that of the body :

DEATH THE GATE OF LIFE.*



MAN is life's great paradox. Animals enter without instruction into the full possession of all their instincts. The present generation learns nothing from the past, and can transmit no new intelligence to the future. The first beaver was as clever a builder, and the first bee as astute a mathematician as the last, and such they will continue forever. Life with the animal races means a certain defined condition of instinctive intelligence, from which circumstances can take little away, and to which circumstances can add as little. To defend themselves from danger, to supply their hunger, to propagate their species, to protect and provide for their young, and then to die, when the perpetuation of the species by procreation has been attained, seem to be the sole objects of their existence in relation to themselves; and to enable them to accomplish these, they are gifted with instincts, and enter without effort into their use. Man is destined to the highest greatness, and born into a state of the lowest helplessness. He has received the grandest intellectual power of all earthly creatures, and is born into the completest ignorance;—the only being possessing hopes of immortality, and the only being conscious of the certainty of death. His development is the slowest,

* Extracted from "*Our Eternal Homes.*"

and yet that development is to be unceasing. Through the gates of weariness and pain he ascends to knowledge; and buys, by an experience of suffering, the prudence that shall prevent suffering.

Toiling in the present, yet the past and the future belong to him;—the past by the rich legacies of its wisdom,—the future by blooming aspirations and promises. Study takes hold of and appropriates the one, and vigorous hope already seizes upon and partially makes its own of the other. Whatever the past has treasured, and whatever the future can promise, belongs to him, the heir of all the ages. But for him to inherit the past his predecessors have had to die, and to inherit the future he will himself have to die. Thus DEATH stares him in the face whichever way he turns. Experience and expectation alike reveal to him the inexorable necessity of human life. There is no escape from it. Death, as a friendly guardian, hands over to him what has been preserved of those gone before; and death, as a warden, shall unlock the portals that at present bar his attainment of what shall come after. Man stands on a narrow isthmus, with an ocean of death on either hand; his life is spent in traversing its restricted limits; and from death, learned as a certainty by what he has witnessed in others, he plunges into death, as a consciousness to himself. However appalled by the vision, his life still must relentlessly march on, and day by day the vision grows more palpable in the perception of how inevitable it is. A mysterious fascination compels him to regard it ~~the more~~ the more he shrinks from it.

The illustrations of death surround him on every hand. Every hour dies that the next may be born; each day dies and sinks into the cold, silent tomb of night that its successor may come forth; the tomb of the past is the womb of the future; the years tremble through a winter, snow-shrouded and ice-stiff, that the blue-eyed babe of spring

may smile on the world that shall laugh out its glad sympathy in flowers; dust rises around him, and dust is the concrete emblem of dissolution. The soil he cultivates and the fuel he burns, the solid globe on which he treads, the clouds that float above him, are all vast cemeteries,—charnel-houses, transformed from death into new forms of life. Chemistry reveals to him the death of matter in its various decompositions; geology speaks to him out of the stony archives of the far-off past of the extinction of races; and history's long corridors and portrait galleries are made melancholy with the mournful knell of nations, dynasties, and men past and gone. Should the lonely student of these mysteries, the solitary worshiper in these huge temples and before these high altars, cherish the wish to leave his name as one of the lights and landmarks of his times, the pallid mist of death dims the statue that ambition dreams it beholds, and the vision of greatness grows faint through the sorrowing rain of tears.

Mankind has made a great mistake in its contemplation of death, and this mistake, while being radically pursued into false assertions as to the past, has as falsely gloomed over the prospects of the future. Some have thought that death was an imperfection,—a blot on the fair face of Creation,—a derangement that has entered into an otherwise perfect plan. They have believed that the primal scheme of creation comprehended no such necessity as man's dying, and that physical dissolution was only an afterthought of Divine vengeance, and inflicted as the penalty of sin. Earth, according to them, was to have been the eternal scene of man's existence, and material being the unchanging necessity of human life. From this opinion we altogether dissent. If death were not exactly coeval with life, it was life's immediate successor. For ages prior to the advent of man these two co-accessory agencies—life and death—were busy

preparing the earth for that advent. There have been six grand groups or periods of animated existence, and five of these have altogether passed away; and they passed away, too, before man was created and died. Many of our rocks are solid sarcophagi. One seventh of our earth's crust is composed of limestone, and limestone is but the imbedded sepulchre of once living creatures. Whatever of this rock was beheld by the first man, was actually a monument of death. Death in organic nature was change, and change in the animated kingdoms was death.

Not only was there death prior to man, but there was also violent death. The larger races preyed upon the smaller; and, to build up their living tissues, the death of subsidiary races was indispensable. And what the evidence of observed facts declares to have been the case, reason can demonstrate must have been the case. Where space is limited in extent, material organizations can only increase in number up to a certain point, and then the space will be full. If increase is to continue, the decease of the old must take place to afford room for the existence of the new. Where matter is limited in quantity, and organisms are composed of matter, then, also, increase, or even continued existence, can only reach a certain point, and death must ensue; not only to furnish material for an increase of numbers, but to supply material for the continued existence of those which already exist. On the *débris* of a dead past the living present can alone stand, and the present must die to permit the existence of the future. Vegetables and animals are endowed with marvelous powers of reproduction, and were so endowed from the beginning. These powers are so prolific that any one race under favorable circumstances could speedily people the world. The fertility of reproduction is an evidence of Divine *prevision* that death must and would occur, and it is, too a proof of Di-

vine provision to guard against the extinction of species resulting from the death of the individual. The bestowal of the fertility was the prophet of death. Death, therefore, was in the world before man. Man eating the fruits of the earth and the herbs of the field entailed upon them vegetable death as the necessary consequence of his existence. Death existed before him, death came with him and by him, and it is only absurd to regard physical death as the consequence of his sin.

It may be urged, that, while it is certain that other creatures died prior to man's advent, yet man would not himself have physically died, unless he had sinned. It is impossible so to state this objection as that it will not involve its own contradiction. In common with all animals, man possessed at first, and still possesses, a material body. This body is subject to all the accidents and necessities to which other material bodies are subject. It must eat, or appropriate fresh matter to supply material, to repair the waste and destruction that life occasions. Life is as a fire, and the tissues are as its fuel; they must consume, and fresh substance must be appropriated to compensate the consumption. Sharing the necessities common to all material existences, man's body shared death. The reproductive powers of man, and the command to reproduce, were infallible indications of the Divine will in his case, as are these things in the case of all other animals. Reproduction was intended to be unceasing, because in the fact of each kind bringing forth their like, man's offspring would be similarly endowed with these powers. Reproduction being unceasing, in order that it might continue, death must ensue, or there would be neither space in which their offspring could exist, nor matter of which they could be composed. From the consideration of man as a physical material being, death therefore

was a necessity to life; and physical death is not to be regarded as the consequence of sin.

Man is superior to the animals, not merely from the form and beauty of the body, but in the possession of spiritual being. This spiritual being is his immortal part. But for the full development of this spiritual being earth is an incompetent, and would ever have been an incompetent plane. It is only adapted for being, and was only designed to be, the school of his preparation, the lower forms where he might become fitted for the more glorious universities on high. If death were the end of existence, and life were dwarfed down to the twin boundaries of the cradle and the grave, then death were indeed a disorder, a derangement of a wise plan. Regarding death as only the introduction to a new state, man is still life's great paradox; but if we were to regard death as the fatal terminus of life's toilsome journey, then man would be nature's most insoluble problem. He would alone be the startling exception to what all observation teaches us,—that indications of universal fitness in things are the evidences of a universal design. The disproportion which exists between man's capacity for improvement, and the small opportunities his earth-life affords him for improvement,—between his ability to acquire knowledge, and the brief term allowed here for its acquisition,—between his almost boundless desires and their limited satisfaction,—between his hopes and his destiny, if death be the cessation of identity; this disproportion is so immense, that it would be out of harmony with all the chorus of testimony to the existence of design that swells up from all other created things. It would teach us at once to doubt of there being any Divine wisdom presiding in the universe; or, rather, the perception of the disproportion would overmaster doubt as to man's future existence; and even though it were false that man would continue to live after death, it would yet

compel us to believe the falsehood despite of the evidence that it was such.

Many have adopted the notion of natural death being the penalty of sin, from the literal language of the Word of God, and their belief in it may be unassailable while their mistaken reading of the Bible remains uncorrected. On this head, the following brief considerations are suggested. I. The Bible does certainly use the words "death" and "dead" in two senses,—the one meaning *natural* decease, the death of the body,—and the other signifying *spiritual* death; not the dissolution of the soul, but such a state of antagonism to God as to render the soul non-receptive of God's blessings, and which perverts into everlasting misery the life which the Creator designed to be an everlasting joy. Only in this way can be understood the promises, "He that liveth and believeth in me shall *never die*;" John xi. 26. "He that believeth in me shall not come into condemnation, but *is passed from death unto life*;" John v. 24. "If a man keep my sayings, he shall never see death;" John viii. 51; and such statements as, "For this my son was *dead*, and is alive again;" or "Ye who were *dead* in trespasses and sins, yet hath he quickened;" Eph. ii. 1. "The *soul* that sinneth it shall *die*;" Ezek. xviii. 4. "I know thy works, that thou hast a name to live, and art *dead*;" Rev. iii. 1. "Enlighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of *death*;" Ps. xiii. 3, etc. II. Jesus came to annul the penalty of sin, and redeem man from the curse: "Jesus Christ hath *abolished death*, and brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel." 2 Tim. i. 10. The death that he abolished was the death of the curse. He did not abolish natural death, therefore natural death was not the death of the curse. The death that He hath abolished is spiritual death; therefore spiritual death, the death of the soul, was the death of the curse. "As in Adam all die, so in Christ

shall all be made alive;" 1 Cor. xv. 22. The life we may have in Christ is not the perpetuation of our natural existence, therefore the death we suffer in Adam was not natural decease. "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. vi. 23. The death and life here contradistinguished are mutual opposites: the life we are to receive through Christ is spiritual life; and the death we have undergone through Adam is spiritual death. III. The same conclusion must be arrived at from the consideration of the narrative in Genesis: "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." That Adam did not naturally die *that day*, the narrative asserts; nor can the words be interpreted that he "became *subject to death* from that day." If natural death was the penalty, nine hundred and thirty years of life is rather a long interval between the announcement of the penalty and its fulfilment. Either the word "day," or the word "death," must be understood in a non-literal sense. "The soul that sinneth, *it* shall die," seems to indicate that the death of the soul, and not the decease of the body, is and was the penalty of sin. This conclusion, confirmed as it is by the narrative itself, is the only one that is consistent with the whole tenor of the Scriptures, and it renders the whole tenor of the Scriptures consistent with the facts of science and the deductions of philosophy. Natural death, therefore, is not the penalty of sin, but the necessary condition of a continued material existence.

While death is a necessity of life, yet it is a benevolent necessity. In its establishment God has only proven Himself a more beneficent Father as well as a wiser contriver. To learn the reasons for the appointment of death, and the consequences resulting from it, will only exalt His claims upon human gratitude, as it will also afford us a grander spectacle of His more comprehensive design. Earth will

be seen to be the seminary of heaven; and the decease of former generations was only contrived to admit of the existence of new generations, whose home and abiding-place is above. Thus, and thus only, is secured the accomplishment of the promise, "Of the increase of his kingdom there shall be no end."

A man dies:—

"Life and thought have gone away,
Side by side,
Leaving door and windows wide:
Careless tenants they!
All within is dark as night:
In the windows is no light;
And no murmur at the door,
So frequent on its hinge before."

In this wreck and desolation, what is it that has died? Evidently only the body. "Ashes to ashes, and dust to dust," is the solemn requiem uttered as to that. It was a marvelous combination of earthly substances, held together by a still more wondrous thing that we call "life;" the bond that held them together is broken, so back to their original elements the substances of the body return. Decomposition shall prepare them for recomposition, in order that the vast cycle of human existence may ceaselessly go on. The body dies because the real man is withdrawn from it. The body was an accident;—however necessary to his birth as an individual, yet not necessary to his continued existence. Through all the manifold and perpetual changes of the body, the man continued the same being, and he continues the same being despite the last great change of death.

Then, what survives death? The Apostle answers the question, "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this

we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven. Not that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Knowing that while we are in the body, we are absent from the Lord; and we are willing to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." 2 Cor. v. 1-8. Absence from the body does not, therefore, destroy the identity or the consciousness of the man. But the preservation of our consciousness and identity necessitates the preservation of our human form, and even of our individual human forms. The man whose body is dead must still remain *a man*; not a mere spark of life, a flickering flame of being, but a natural and distinct existence, a human being conscious of his own identity, responsible for his previous conduct, and cognizant of God's presence. But form implies substance, for form is but the limitation of substance: and substance in form implies body. Man must, consequently, possess two bodies, one the *material*, which dies,—and one a *spiritual* body, which survives the dissolution of the other.

The Scripture warrants the belief that spirits are substantial men, not composed of earthly, but of spiritual and never-dying substance; and the Apostle has devoted a large portion of his First Epistle to the Corinthians to elucidate this subject. In it he declares, "There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body," 1 Cor. xv. 35-50; and further asserts that "the natural body is sown, and the spiritual body rises." He very felicitously compares the sowing, death, and rising of man, to the sowing, death, and germination of grain. This comparison is so complete that it deserves minute consideration. The apostle makes use of three terms in relation to both man and grain; and to fix the analogy it will be necessary to determine the resemblance of each term. We begin with the middle phrase.

The death of the grain symbolizes the death of the man. Both must die before they can rise. But *sowing*, the first term, must take place before the death of either. This shows that the sowing of the grain cannot be analogous to the burial of man's dead body; and this for several reasons; first, the *man* is not present in the body when that is interred,—we inter *it* only because *he* is no longer there; and, secondly, the sowing takes place *before* death, according to the Apostle, whereas interment does not take place till *after* death. A further reason why the Apostle cannot have designed to compare the sowing of the grain to the interment of the dead body, is that many dead bodies are not interred at all. And a still further reason is, that the third term of the comparison will be altogether frustrated by the assignment of such an interpretation to the first.

What portion of man's history is it, then, we ask, which is analogous to the sowing of the grain? The Apostle is speaking of *man's* being sown, not of any sowing of man's body. We answer, man is sown into the world when he is born into the world, just as the grain is sown into the earth when placed there. The man is sown by birth into the world in order that *he* may die, just as the grain is sown into the earth, *its world*, in order that *it* may die. The whole of the description is strikingly apposite to this interpretation. In a far higher than a mere gross, material sense, man is sown in "corruption, dishonor, weakness," when, as a natural body, he enters by birth into the world. The "sowing" is the beginning of man's earth-life, or life on the earth; and the hereditary propensities to evil, the lusts of sense, and the frivolities of time, render it far too often and too much a whole scene of corruption, dishonor, and weakness.

Man's death is compared to the death of the grain. This comparison is exactly accurate. In the grain it is only

the husk that dies. With the man it is only the husk—the natural body, the physical envelope—that dies. When the husk of the grain dies, the germ of new life has sprouted forth ; and when the physical envelope of the man dies, the spiritual being is released from it and ascends. It is necessary that the grain should be sown that it may die, and it is necessary that it should both be sown and die that the germ of new life may ascend into the bright light and warm sunshine above its earthly resting-place. And, in like manner, man must be born that he may die, and both be born and die in order that he may rise a spiritual, immortal being. The providential purpose in the implantation of the germ of life within the grain was, that by dying a more munificent life might be developed ; and the great design in the birth of man was, that by dying a nobler existence might be attained. The enlarged multiplication of the species, as the result of the death of the grain, is the symbol of the enhanced development of the powers and privileges, the gifts and the glory of human existence, to be realized in the other life.

The third term requires consideration. Not only are they alike sown and do they die alike, but there is a further resemblance in the quickening of the man and the germination of the grain. The dead husk and starchy substance of the grain do not rise ; but the living germ, from the husk, the living principle, from the body of the seed. So, in like manner, man's spirit rises from the dead body ; its ascent from the body is the cause and sign of death. The dead husk wastes away in the soil, and the dead body moulders back to dust. The life-germ in both cases has no further need of the outer envelope it wore, and can put it to no further use. Without it, both the sprouting stem of wheat and the risen spirit of man are more glorious things than they were before.

Sometimes this comparison of the Apostle is regarded as illustrating a fancied resurrection of *the dead body*; but this view is evidently wrong. It illustrates most felicitously the resurrection of the living man from the dead body; but to attempt to interpret it otherwise renders the comparison singularly inapt. The germination of a seed is not the resuscitation of the dead husk, the covering of the germ; and the resurrection of *the man* is not any resuscitation of the body. The germination of the grain is the bursting up of its inner living principle into a more beautiful and a new form of existence; and the resurrection of the man is the rising up of his living principle, his spirit, into a new and grander existence. Consequently, the Apostle has been really treating of the resurrection of the man from the dead body, not of the resuscitation of the dead body itself. The impersonal pronoun "it," used in our translation of the passage (1 Cor. xv. 42-44), is not used or implied in the Greek. The *man* has been clothed with a mortal, a natural body, "the earthly house of this tabernacle," and the *man* is raised an "incorruptible, immortal, spiritual body," or has put on "the house not made with hands, the building of God, eternal in the heavens."

Addressing some who believed in the old Hebrew and Egyptian idea of the resurrection of the dead body, the Apostle declares in the same chapter, "Thou fool; that which thou sowest, thou sowest NOT that body that shall be;" 1 Cor. xv. 36, 37; for, as he asserts again, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption;" ver. 50; or, as he more emphatically expresses it, "the natural body is sown, and *the spiritual body is raised*," ver. 44. He no more means that the dead natural body shall at some future day be sublimated and transformed into a spiritual body, than he intends to teach that the dead husk of the grain shall be

transformed into the living plant. *That* is dead and done with, and dead because done with; and up from the dead husk or body the living principle rises. The birth, death, and resurrection of the man, and the sowing, death, and germination of the grain are thus mutually representative; and the comparison of the Apostle is justified and borne out even into details. In both, death is, therefore, the gate of life.

What intermission, asks the soul yearning after life, is there between our conscious existence in this world and the commencement of our consciousness in the next? Believers in the dogma of the resurrection of the dead body have had to invent what the Word of God does not justify them in the invention of, a strange sort of nondescript middle state, filling up the period elapsing between the decease of the body and its future resurrection; while yet they were baffled by many passages of Scripture that would not harmonize with their hypothesis. Much extravagant speculation has been wasted upon this middle state, and the wildest notions have been hazarded, when nothing is simpler than the formula, "a natural body for the natural world, and for the spiritual world a spiritual body."

The root of all errors on this subject has been in the definition given to spirit. It has been so long called *immaterial*, that almost all idea of substantiality has been banished from ordinary conceptions of it. We can, however, have no idea of the existence of something that is not substantial. There are three degrees of substance, each discretely differing from the others, different as to qualities and properties, but still substance. These three are,—material substance, which forms the lowest class in existence; spiritual substance, which forms the middle link in the chain of being; and Divine substance, which is God. The spirit is immaterial, that is, its substance is altogether

discrete from *matter*; but it is only a lax use of words which confounds the idea of immateriality with that of unsubstantiality. That which has form must have substance, as that only which is substance can possess form. Without form, existence is impossible; for existence is only the form which the essence assumes. To say that a spirit is without substance, is to say, therefore, that a spirit has no existence, that it is not: or, as an acute writer expresses it, "that it is NO-THING, existing NO-WHERE and NO-WHEN."

The Word of God unmistakably conducts us to the conclusion that spirits are bodies, substantial, and possessing form; and leads us most satisfactorily to believe that there is no such thing as *disembodied* spirits, and no such place as the middle state of existence, such as that surmised between the death of the material body and its resuscitation. Moses was certainly dead, and yet on the Mount of Transfiguration the three disciples beheld him ministering to the Lord Jesus. Matt. xvii. 3. The two angels who appeared to John, and who declared themselves to be prophets, Rev. xix. 10; xxii. 9, were substantial beings possessing form. The thousands rescued out of every "kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation," Rev. v. 9, were substantial beings in the human form. These had certainly lived on earth, they had as certainly died on earth, and yet as certainly they possessed substantial bodies, which the Apostle could see, just as they also could behold each other, and together praise the Lamb.

Two important conclusions, however, result from the foregoing observations. First, there are only two kinds of bodies spoken of in the Bible, the one kind *natural* bodies, which remain on earth, matter to matter, or dust to dust; and the other kind *spiritual* bodies, which belong to the spiritual world. There are no others than these. These beatified men did not possess natural bodies, for these they

had left behind when they quitted the material world? therefore, the only conclusion remaining to us is, that they were *spiritual* bodies. Their substantiality was spiritual substance, or, in other words, they were spiritual bodies.

But, secondly, the existence of man as a spiritual body is spoken of as being the result of *resurrection*. Hence, as these did possess such spiritual bodies, their resurrection must have already taken place. Consequently, the resurrection rightly understood is not the resuscitation of the dead material body, but the raising of the spiritual body from the dead natural body. There was to them no middle state of existence, they had already entered into their "eternal house," "absent from the body" they were "present with the Lord," and had joined the "spirits of just men made perfect." To precisely the same conclusion are we led by the parable of Dives and Lazarus. Luke xvi. 19-30. Both Lazarus and Dives were spiritual bodies, substantial beings in the human form; and at once, without any middle state, Lazarus went to his own place, and Dives to the place he also had made his own. The great impassable gulf was eternally fixed between them. There was to be no common ground on which they might in future stand together; their resurrection had been realized, and henceforth were they to continue to exist spiritual beings in the spiritual world, the one in heaven and the other in hell.

Exactly similar is the declaration made by the Lord: "Now that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he called the Lord the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto Him." Luke xx. 37, 38. This magnificent statement declares several things. 1. That, as seen by the Lord, there is no such thing as a dead *man*; or that the death of the body is not the decease of the man. 2. That the dead *are* raised; not

that they shall be, or may hope to be raised, but that the resurrection of the dead is a fact now taking place,—the raising of the man from the dead body. 3. That this resurrection was taking place in the days of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, for they had then been “raised.” 4. That Moses was, to some extent, conscious of the certainty of this fact. 5. That the apparently simple expression of God being the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, is at the same time a divinely-given testimony to the fact of their continued existence, and a prophetic declaration that the “heirs to the promises” shall in like manner be raised, when it shall please the Divine Wisdom to call them home to Himself.

Some of those thus raised are spoken of by the Apostle as “the spirits of just men made perfect.” Heb. xii. 23. Now if they were already perfect, it must be folly to presume that they are enjoying only a moiety of existence, pining in longing anticipation for a reunion with their to-be-resuscitated material bodies, which in their old earthly state they rejoiced to cast away.

The term resurrection, or “rising again,” no more implies the resuscitation of the dead body than does being “born again” imply the re-entrance into the world through the womb of the mother. Nicodemus misunderstood the one, and many persons appear only able to misunderstand the other expression. Man rises from the dead; it is only the body that is *dead*; and resurrection, therefore, is man’s rising from the dead body.

This view of the resurrection renders it universal, immediate, and certain. It abolishes the intellectual nightmare of a middle condition of disembodiment; it strips death of all the dark imaginations with which it has been invested: as the Scriptures teach us, “it *abolishes death*,” for “death is swallowed up in victory;” and through the Gospel

“life and immortality are brought to life.” The babe born this morning has entered upon the possession of a life which can never be destroyed. God has formed it so far in His image as to have endowed it henceforth with the attribute of eternal being. Its existence for weal or woe is now an unalterable fact; it is now a pillar that can never be thrown down; a flame that can never be extinguished. Mutations may and must pass over it in the career of its pilgrimage below; the great mutation of physical death must be endured at the end thereof; but the being still lives on, and will live on forever, an identity never to be merged into that of any other being, and a consciousness that shall never be lost. That little babe struggling with feeble cries, with the breath for the first time distending its lungs, is a marvelous thing, a sublime spectacle, a stupendous and eternal fact.

Life is a joy, and the culmination of the joy of life is the certainty that it is indestructible. In this joy of life we may feel strong and buoyant; and, though there are dark riddles that we cannot read aright in this lower plane of life's manifestation, tortuous mazes among which we wander, mysterious problems we cannot solve, sorrows we cannot soothe, wrongs we cannot redress, and misery that we can do so little to alleviate, yet the certainty of eternal life being within us, nerves the pinions of hope to sweep forward to the realities of the second chapter of the book of being, to unriddle and set right the problems and wrongs of the first. He in whom this sublime consciousness is awakened can confide in the compensations that must be provided, and the workings of which we shall one day be able to comprehend. The veil that covers the face of Isis, the mysteries of Divine Wisdom in mundane things, may not be removed by the hand of mortal, but this mortality shall put on immortality; our life shall robe itself in garments as

immortal as itself, and then the veil shall melt away from before the vision of the soul. Life is a joy, and the more fully conscious we become of our life, the greater becomes the joy. Earth's "muddy vestments of decay," this "mortal coil," frustrate and diminish that consciousness. Only at rare intervals, and for brief periods, do we enter into the higher potencies and principles of our own nature, and even then the body with its material necessities and weight and feebleness bears us down. Our souls are in a double sense chained to earth, both as a physical and mental fact. Death is the deliverer, which enfranchises the spirit from its prison-house. Then death is a blessing.

We solemnly ask ourselves the question, What does death in reality do? And Death, rightly heard, answers us, "I find the body feeble and worn-out, crippling the young limbs of the soul, fettering its higher soarings, blinding the soul's eager sight, benumbing the stretched ears that strive to catch the inner harmonies of creation, wearying the laborious thought, congealing the struggling utterance, and investing the warm affections with the impotence of dust, and I strip the gyves away. I burst the bars of the prison, and throw down the doors, that the soul may ascend to liberty. Man in the body is as the chrysalis concealed in the grub. I rend the pupa case that the psyche may come forth. My work is only the pulling down of the scaffolding, that the building may be discovered,—only the breaking of the ground-glass globe, that the light may shine forth in its undimmed brightness,—only drawing the dazzling blade from the hiding sheath that it may be kissed by the sunbeams which it reflects back to heaven,—only the opening of the green bud, that the full-bosomed flower may appear. Men have feared me and slandered me. They have painted me as a grizzly wreck of being, a dart-armed monster reveling in the misery I make, my coming a horror, and my

work a cruelty. They have slandered me! A reaper among the young flowers, the blossoms which I gather I bear upwards to heaven. A gleaner among the ears that are left on the ground, and I garner the grain to God!"

And our hearts reply that death is a warder, flinging open the gates that barrier the path of mortality to immortality; a white-wanded usher, introducing man to the sublimer associates of the heavenly assembly; our guide over the slender bridge that spans the gulf between this life and the next; the great revealer, lifting the dark screen that has long concealed what we have so eagerly desired to behold; the angel of loving mien, bidding the sorrowful to weep no more, and whispering to the weary to rest. Because life is a joy, and because death is only the introduction of man into a higher and fuller life, therefore *death is a blessing.*

EXTRACT FROM SWEDENBORG.

"The spirit of man, after the dissolution of the body, appears in the spiritual world, in a human form, in every respect as in the natural world. He enjoys the faculty of sight, of hearing, of speaking, and of feeling, as he did in the world; and he is endowed with every faculty of thought, of will, and of action, as when he was in the world; in a word, he is a man in all respects, even to the most minute particular, except that he is not encompassed with the gross body which he had in the world. He leaves this when he dies, and never resumes it. This continuation of life is what is meant by the resurrection."

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for whatever lives and feels in man belongs to his spirit : and there is nothing in him whatever, from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, which does not live and feel ; wherefore, when the body is separated from his spirit, which is called dying, the man continues to be a man, and lives still.

“That, as to his interiors, man is a spirit, has been granted me to know by much experience, the whole of which, were I to adduce it, would fill many sheets. I have conversed with spirits as a spirit, and I have conversed with them as a man in the body ; and when I conversed with them as a spirit, they were not aware but that I was a spirit myself ; and they saw that I was in human form, as they were. It was thus that my interiors appeared before them ; for, when I conversed with them as a spirit, my material body did not appear.

“That, as to his interiors, man is a spirit, may appear with certainty from the fact, that after his body is separated from him, as occurs when he dies, he still continues to live a man as before. That I might be fully convinced of this truth, it has been granted me to converse with almost all whom I ever knew when they lived in the body, with some for a few hours, with some for weeks and months, and with some for years. This was granted me, chiefly to the end, that I might be assured of the truth myself, and that I might testify it to others.

“To what has already been stated, may be added, that every man, even while he lives in the body, is, as to his spirit, in society with spirits, although he is not conscious of it ; a good man being, through them as mediums, in an angelic society, and a bad man in an infernal society ; and that he passes into the same society after death. This has often been declared and shown to those, who, after death, came among spirits. The man does not indeed appear in that society as a spirit, while he lives in the world, by reason that he then thinks in a natural manner : but persons who think abstractedly from the body, being then in the spirit, do sometimes appear in their own society.”—Swedenborg’s “*Heaven and Hell*,” n. 432, 433, 436–438.

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the following chapter, where we shall exhibit some of the extravagancies into which the principle has led, and compare them with the excellence of what we conceive to be the system of the Bible and the Church.

Heart & Pulpit

B. B.

Maude

~~uncomplete~~

CHAPTER V.

On the errors and extravagancies into which the positive belief and assertion of a moral change in baptism has led. A comparative view of it with the system set forth by the Episcopal Church.

However this doctrine may appear to some to be a harmless hypothesis, at least one which seems to honor God's ordinance and prevent its being a vain ceremony, and that therefore it should not be condemned, unless positively denounced in the Scriptures, we ought to remember that there is a solemn anathema against those who add to God's word. We must not teach for commandments of God the doctrines of men. Nor must we insist on that which after all may be but conjecture. This hypothesis has with some, in all ages of the Christian church, grown into a positive certainty, and, after having been enlarged to a most marvellous degree, been made the groundwork of a religious system, which so changed the blessed religion of Christ as to require a tremendous revolution to overthrow it, and therefore ought to be watched and dreaded in its first symptoms of resuscitation. Let us trace its history.

St. Cyprian, one of the early Fathers, speaks of being "succoured by the life-giving waters—having the stain of former years washed away in them—being quickened into a new life in them—putting off his natural self—being changed in heart and soul." St. Ambrose says "that children in baptism are reformed back to Adam's state of purity." Tertullian, answering those who objected to ascribing so marvellous a power to the water of baptism, says: "Its very marvellousness should be our reason for believing it." After speaking of the various uses God has made of water, and the reverence due to it, he says: "no wonder, then, in baptism it has the gift of quickening." This principle, that God could and did, by natural things in the sacraments, operate a

moral effect through the body on the soul even of an infant, was carried to such an extent that it led to the administration of the rite of confirmation and the Lord's Supper, not only to children, but to insensible persons in the article of death. Bishop Jewell says, that St. Bennett caused the sacrament to be laid on a dead woman's breast, thinking that the outward ceremony thereof without faith, or the inward motion of the party, might be sufficient for good. In one of the ancient churches a canon was necessary to prevent administering baptism and the Lord's Supper to dead corpses. It was required in some places that for every baptism fresh water must be put into the font, because that used was defiled by the original sin of the child previously baptized therein. Some had such confidence in its effect to wash away sin, that they put off their baptism till the hour of death, that there might be the least possible danger of losing the effect of it, which they thought could scarcely be regained. Many thought it a dishonoring of God to suppose that a child could possibly be saved without it, and therefore encouraged the performance of it by any one at the very moment of its birth, if there was the least danger of death. Others there were, and those not a few—perhaps the whole Greek church—who believed that unbaptized infants go neither to Heaven or hell, but to some middle place. There were connected with the rite of baptism a number of imposing ceremonies, such as the use of oil, salt, candles, the white robe, the exorcism, all designed to magnify the ordinance in the esteem of men. The Romish church makes great use of them in order to enforce her high views of the ordinance, which she declares to be necessary to salvation—not *generally necessary* to salvation, as our Church does. She declares that it confers grace by its own power (*ex opere operato*) on all who only place no obstacle in its way. Children of course can put no obstacle in its way, and are therefore fully operated on. The child, according to many of their writers, made by baptism just what Adam was before the fall, pure, holy. If he retains this state, it is his justifying righteousness; if he loses it, with great difficulty, if ever, can it be regained. There are, however, very many venial sins which he may commit without losing baptismal grace, and which Adam might have com-

mitted without forfeiting God's favor. Against such views of the effect of baptism, and the justification connected with it, our Reformers strongly protested.*

Nevertheless, the removal from our baptismal service of the corrupt appendages of the Church of Rome, and which were designed to promote the belief of an entire change of nature in baptism, was gradual. In the baptismal services which were adopted in the reign of King Edward, there were two ceremonies retained, which were afterwards left out, viz: the ceremony of exorcism and the white garment. By the former, the minister authoritatively commands the unclean spirit to depart from these infants, and prepare to burn in everlasting fire. "Presume not hereafter to exercise any tyranny towards these infants, whom Christ has purchased with his precious blood, and by this his baptism calleth to be of his flock," are some of its words. In the latter, a white vesture is put upon it, and these words addressed to it—"Take this white vesture, for a token of the innocency which by God's grace in this holy sacrament is given unto thee; and for a sign whereby thou art admonished, so long as thou

*Wall, in his learned work on infant baptism, in which we have a full history of the opinions which in different ages have been held as to its efficacy, says, that a divine of the Church of Rome has outdone all, "for he supposes the child at the time of his baptism to have one strong actual motion of love to God. One single instant, he says, is sufficient for the exercise of that act of love. Concupiscence is as it were mortified in that one moment. It should not be thought strange that children should love God with a love of choice at their baptism." Mr. Wall quotes very aptly against him one of his own sayings—"That learned men are sometimes most subject to error, and to lead others into error; that common people are not so apt to fall into great mistakes for various reasons"—to which Mr. Wall adds another, viz: "That common people, having no assistance from learning and philosophy, have nothing but common sense to trust to; so they generally keep close to that." The above is the best excuse for the errors of the new school which has risen up. The sentiment of St. Austin, as quoted by Wall, may also be applied to such—"if we should go about by discourse to prove that infants, which as yet have no knowledge of human things, have knowledge of divine, I am afraid we should offer an affront to our senses, when, let us say what we will, the evidence of truth overpowers all the force of our talk." St. Austin (says Wall) does not pretend that infants, who are baptized, have in any proper sense faith, or repentance, or conversion of the heart.

livest, to give thyself to innocency of living, that after this transitory life thou mayest be partaker of the life everlasting." See King Edward's Liturgies, Parker edition. After a certain period, under the auspices of Archbishop Laud and others, there seemed to be a return to some of these high views; so that at the time of the Savoy conference, in the reign of James the Second, what with the remaining influence of Laudian principles and hostility to the dissenters, whose objections to the Liturgy were in some things very trivial and provoking, we find the Bishops, and others acting with them, countenancing the idea "that only some relics of sin remained after baptism;" and that, "notwithstanding some frailties and slips of their childhood, they may not have totally lost what was given to them in baptism," using a language very apt to mislead in forming our estimate of the true condition of children, although there may not be a positive assertion of a radical change of nature in baptism. See Cardwell's History of the Conferences on the Common Prayer.

If it now be asked--why thus dwell on doctrines renounced long since at the Reformation, and of whose return there can surely be no danger? We reply, that a few years since, and we should have seen no sufficient reason for so doing; but unhappily there is now but too much cause for it. These doctrines are again revived in full force by some, and with modifications by many others in our Protestant church. Books, tracts, and sermons, advocating them, have for the last twelve years been industriously circulated amongst us. In some of them the principle is maintained that it is most natural that God should choose to dispense his grace through the material emblems of the sacraments, rather than through the faculties and affections of the soul exercised in faith and repentance; that in truth faith and repentance derive their virtue from one of them, (baptism,) and deserve not the name beforehand. One of them declares that "a miracle is performed in every baptism." Another of them* says, "no change of the heart or of the affections, no repentance however radical, no faith, no love, come up to this idea of a new birth from above. It takes them all in and comprehends them all, but

* Dr. Pusey.

itself is more than all.” “As the child is created and nourished in and by the womb of the mother, so is the new soul begotten and nourished in the waters of baptism,” is his favorite comparison. He upbraids Christians with having less faith than some among the Jews, at the baptism of Pagans into their church, “who had higher notions, and figured that a new soul descended from the region of spirits on the admitted proselyte.” It is difficult at times to form any conception of the kind or degree of change supposed by these writers to be effected by baptism. Sometimes it is described as an union with Christ, like that supposed to take place in the Supper among the Romanists, when the receiver partakes of the actual body and blood of Christ, and thus is incorporated into him. At others, a sudden and great moral revolution is effected in the soul even of the infant, of which it may perhaps be conscious. One of them, some of whose writings have been published and circulated in this country—thus addresses the child :

* “Dear Christian child! was it the power
 “That in those gifted waters came,
 “Which stirred thee at that solemn hour,
 “And thrilled thro’ all thy trembling frame?
 “Oh, was it keen and fierce the smart,
 “When the old root within thee died,
 “And the new nature in thy heart
 “Rose like the swell of Ocean’s tide?”

It is however to be hoped that there are but few who would regard this in any other light than poetry ; and yet there are many others who freely advocate views on the subject more likely to be injurious, because more likely to be received and acted on. There are those who advocate a baptismal regeneration, most seriously interfering, as we think, with the scripture doctrine of repentance or conversion, superseding the necessity of it altogether in some, and of course making a very great reduction of it in others. In proof of this we adduce the following passages from the writings of Mr. Gresley, an English divine of some distinction, two of whose volumes have been published and circulated in our country.†

* Frederick Faber, recently gone over to Rome.

† One of the volumes is on the subject of preaching, and is addressed, to candidates for the ministry, and contains the doctrine objected to

In one of them he says, baptismal regeneration “is the beginning of the life of God in the soul”—“it is the implanting in the heart the seed of divine grace.” P. 133. “God does then and there implant the principle of faith in the child’s heart.” P. 135. “The Church takes each child into her arms, and by the use of Christ’s holy ordinance *she* confers on him a *new nature* by water and the Spirit.” As soon as they are able to understand what things were renounced in baptism, she exhorts them “*not to turn from them and repent, but renounce*—that is, to have nothing to do with them from the beginning.” P. 246. “Those who have fallen from their baptismal purity, are to be reminded of the privileges they have lost, and the imminent danger they are in.” P. 132. He acknowledges that the majority fall from their baptismal grace, but that the Church holds out to such the hope of repentance.” P. 247. “*The evangelical*, he says, dwells almost entirely on conversion.” “The churchman preaches baptismal regeneration, and, to *those who have fallen*, repentance.” P. 248. We should not thus have noticed a work of this kind, did it not, we fear, but too faithfully represent the sentiments of many as exhibited in sermons, tracts, and essays, becoming more and more common in the Episcopal Church of England and America. The very fact of the publication of this, and similar works, and the favor they find, is evidence of it. It is plain, that there is a wide difference between Mr. Gresley and those thinking with us on a subject of great importance. Mr. Gresley believes, to use his own language, “that every thing is given in baptism”—that the object of education is only to preserve that purity which is infused at baptism—that some do retain it, though the majority lose it—that the Church, assured that they have received it, and that they can by means of a pious education preserve it, does not exhort them to turn from the things renounced and repent, but to renounce—that is, to have nothing to do with them from the beginning. Now, even supposing that renounce alluded

though in a slighter degree; the other is a fictitious work, entitled Bernard Leslie, whose object throughout is to hold up to odium the evangelical clergy of England, and to object to their doctrines. The quotations are from this volume.

*The former was written
some years since for the benefit
of the student of our General Assembly*

only to things with which we have never yet had to do, and not to things also with which we have had to do—a perfectly new idea—we might ask if God, in commanding us to be perfect—to do no sin—thereby meant to encourage the belief that there ever yet was one man on earth who was free from sin, and needed no repentance ; but rather to show his condemnation of all sin, and to bring in all men guilty. And where has the Church, in any of her other services, furnished the shadow of a belief or hope, that one of her baptized members needed no repentance—seeing that in all of them she has provided most penitential exercises, and actually gave baptism only on the faithful promise of a repentance in after years whereby we forsake sin, and will not admit any to confirmation and the Lord's Supper, without the fulfilment of the promise—that is, a true repentance. It did, indeed, not become the Church, any more than our Lord, to use language which might even seem to allow of sin at all ; but as St. Bernard said of the injunction to be perfect, “ it did not escape the notice of the giver of the precept, that the weight of the precept exceeded man's strength ; but he judged it expedient, that man should be reminded of his insufficiency in this very way, and know what extent of righteousness he should aim at with all his might. In commanding impossibilities therefore, he did not render men prevaricators, but humble, that every mouth might be stopped.” A similar use has been made of another passage in the baptismal service, wherein the Church is called on to pray, after his baptism, that “ the child may lead the rest of his life according to this beginning.” It is maintained that this beginning means the holy nature put into the child—the new current given to its faculties and affections, which are only to be continued ; instead of being referred to the solemn vows made, the faith and repentance promised, the prayers offered up. It had just before been declared that he was signed with the sign of the cross, in token that *hereafter* he should not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified—be Christ's faithful soldier and servant to his life's end. After the baptism it is prayed, not that the child may preserve this new nature, this purity given, but that he may crucify the old man, and utterly abolish the whole body of

sin. In the final exhortation, instead of the sponsor being exhorted to remind the child of the new heart which he has received, and to enjoin it upon him to hold it fast, they must teach what a solemn vow, promise, and profession, he has made—that is, of repentance and faith, which, by reason of its tender age, it could not perform before baptism; and that he who is baptized *should die from sin*. Let any one read over the service and ask, if it be possible that the Church, if desiring to set forth the fact of the child's positive renewal, could have expressed herself in terms so illy calculated to make that impression, and convey that idea.

Having thus seen to what extravagancies and corruptions the theory of a positive change in the yet undeveloped faculties and affections of the unconscious babe has led, let us for a moment consider the theory for which we plead, and the probable effects thereof. According to the promises of the covenant, forgiveness of sin, (of course original sin in children) and the aids of the spirit, belong to our children. These are solemnly sealed to each one in baptism at his birth. They are washed from original sin, or the corruption of their nature—not from the existence and stain of it in the soul, but through the atonement of Christ from the condemnation of it. It shall not be permitted, except through their own wilful choice and actual sin, to exclude them from Heaven. If they die in childhood—that is, during any part of that time lying between their birth and the age of discretion—even though we may see symptoms of an unrenewed nature, we may be assured that God in his mercy will receive them; and that he is full able, in his own way and time, to effect whatever change may be necessary to fit them for Heaven. As they are not yet able to discern their real condition, and to choose between good and evil, we trust in God's mercy and his promises. But when that fearfully interesting period comes—the age of discretion—at that moment they are under a most solemn promise to pay the debt contracted on entering the Church—that is, heartily to embrace the religion of Christ; in other words, to believe and repent, which in baptism they faithfully promised. They now, regarded as adults, are required to determine whether they will accept or reject the religion of Christ. Yea or

nay it must be. The repentance and faith which they have promised, are precisely the same required of adult converts. They must, by the Holy Spirit, through the word, be convinced of sin, original and actual—must see that they are lost sinners without a true repentance and genuine faith in Christ—must renounce the Devil and all his works, by a deliberate act of their own will, and declare war against all the sinful lusts of the flesh—must experience the renewing influences of the Spirit—must be able by it to say, Abba Father—must say, in the words of the Catechism, I heartily thank God who has put me into this state of salvation, and I feel that the Holy Spirit has sanctified me. These are not things which they have preserved from their baptism onward; for the Catechism says, they cannot by reason of their tender age perform them; it is something which they now do, and which the Church consented to wait for until this very time; that which the adult must do before baptism—precisely the same thing, and nothing else. Now, how shall we reconcile with this the views of those who say, that some retain their new nature given in baptism, so as to need no repentance; and others only a slight repentance for some sins, but no radical change, no conversion—that is, turning of the soul to God in faith and repentance. The Church teaches us but one kind of repentance and one faith—both of them deep, thorough, transforming. She requires but one in baptism. If there be any who need none, who, when they come to years of discretion are so pure as not to need the only repentance which the Church acknowledges and requires, then she has made these children at their baptism solemnly promise a falsehood, and if they renew those vows in confirmation, they renew the falsehood; and, moreover, such, according to her terms, have no right to the Lord's Supper, for she deems none worthy, except they come truly repenting of their sins, and steadfastly purposing to lead a new life; and if they do come, they must be guilty of hypocrisy while using all those deeply penitential prayers which she has provided for them on that occasion.*

*If we can and if some do, live to the age of discretion, so as to need no repentance—so that their angels need never blush for them (as one